

OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE

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| LOCAL COMMISSIONERS MEMORANDUM |
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OTDA-4037EL (Rev. 11/98)

Transmittal No: 99 LCM-5

Date: March 26, 1999

Division: Temporary Assistance

TO: Local District Commissioners

SUBJECT: Learnfare Statewide Expansion

ATTACHMENTS: None

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify issues regarding Learnfare implementation time-frames and available funding for the implementation of the Learnfare program (Social Services Law 131-y).

98 ADM-7, Learnfare, directs local districts to submit Learnfare plans by March 31, 1999. This directive also advises local districts that this Learnfare plan must include all schools within the local social services district. This directive remains unchanged.

Learnfare continues to apply only to children in grades one through six in receipt of public assistance. No changes to this requirement are anticipated. However, a proposed amendment to Social Service Law 131-y may change the implementation time-frames for Learnfare. Currently, Learnfare must be fully implemented in all social services districts by September 1999. If enacted, these changes will require that Learnfare be implemented in at least one-half of all school districts in all social services districts for the school year beginning September 1999 and in all schools in all social services districts for the school year beginning September 2000. If a law is promulgated which changes the current implementation time-frames for the Learnfare program, we will advise local social services districts at that time. It is important that social services districts continue with their current implementation schedules.

Learnfare "start-up" money was limited to those districts who chose to be pilot sites in the 1997-98 and 1998-99 school years. Currently there are no implementation funds for non-pilot districts implementing Learnfare for the 1999-2000 school year. While no funds have yet been appropriated for Learnfare expansion, the proposed executive budget includes \$4 million for Learnfare implementation costs. However, in the January 15, 1998 "Dear Commissioner" Letter, all local districts were provided with an allocation for Transitional Activities. This letter specified that districts may use this allocation (100% TANF funded) for costs associated with the implementation of welfare reform. We consider the costs associated with the start-up of the Learnfare program to qualify as an allowable expenditure under this allocation. This may include computer equipment and counseling services related to the Learnfare program.

Many districts have yet to claim expenses against these available funds. If a local district chooses to use these funds, claiming should be done in accordance with instructions provided in the January 15, 1998 "Dear Commissioner" Letter. All program expenditures for activities must be incurred before June 30, 1999, and all claims for these expenditures should be submitted by August 15, 1999. Subject to re-appropriation of funds, activities may be extended. Any questions regarding this claiming should be referred to Roland Levie (Regions I through IV) at 1-800-343-8859, extension 4-7549 and to Marvin Gold (Region V) at (212) 383-1733.

Questions regarding this release, or any questions regarding Learnfare should be directed to your Division of Temporary Assistance regional representative.

Patricia A. Stevens
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Temporary Assistance